

The 4th Forum

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month
streak of
making
mission

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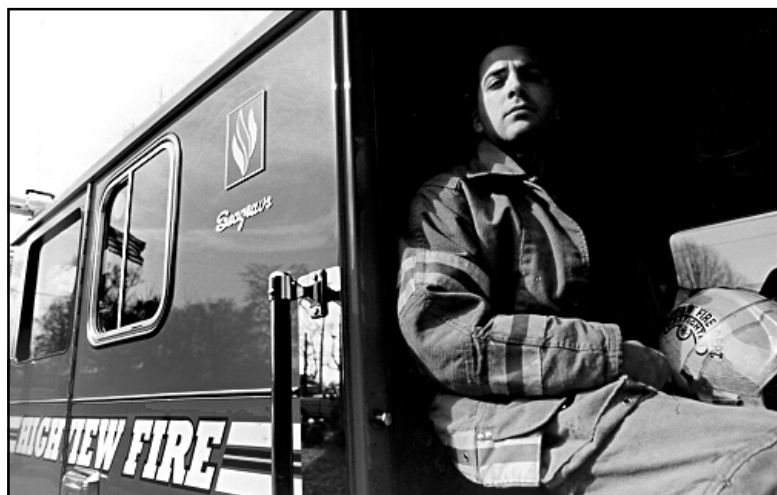
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Marine blazes path to success through firefighting, Corps



Sgt. Christopher Kitchen, sits in the fire truck that carries him to the fires he fights in Clarksville, Ind.

STORY AND PHOTO BY SGT. JIM GOODWIN

CLARKSVILLE, Ind. — “Driven” is how a fellow fire fighter describes Sgt. Christopher Kitchen.

His Marine Corps recruiter calls him “focused.”

Those who know Kitchen describe him as goal-oriented, always conquering life’s little challenges and working towards his goal of a career in law enforcement.

Kitchen, a Marine Corps reservist and volunteer firefighter, describes himself as a “busy, yet self-gratifying” person.

As a Marine Corps recruiter’s aide here, Kitchen spends his days talking to high school students, making phone calls and assisting recruiters. Several nights a week he indulges in games of indoor soccer. He’s played soccer his entire life and likes to stay with it when he can.

But perhaps the most demanding part of the 26-year-old’s life occurs the moment his pager goes off. The pager issued to him by the Highview Fire Department in Louisville, where he’s been a volunteer firefighter nearly two years.

“It’s an adrenaline rush,” said Kitchen of his fire fighting activities. “When you run into a house that’s burning to the ground and you’re the first man to the

door and you’re staring the beast in the face, it’s definitely a rush.”

But firefighting is both a passion and a duty for Kitchen. Despite the often long hours and extensive danger involved, Kitchen doesn’t think about the risks involved, a trait he attributes to his Marine Corps training.

“I think if I worried about my life on every fire run, it would play a role in how effective I am [as a firefighter,]” said Kitchen.

When a call comes in, it’s off to the firehouse, on with his gear, and out to the scene on a fire truck.

“I wanted a career helping other individuals,” he said. “I don’t like being confined to an office. I’m more of an out-on-streets-type person.”

Kitchen recalls one fire call that required his services until 3 a.m. Immediately afterwards, he and his fellow fire fighters were called to action again, this time until 7 a.m. By 8 a.m., it was off to work, followed by his Emergency Medical Technician course that night at 6.

“It’s [firefighting] like anything else,” said Kitchen. “We have a job to do, we go and we do it.”

On the road to becoming a police officer, Kitchen said the Corps has given him the training necessary to handle firefighting. In turn, firefighting should give him the experience he needs for law enforcement.

“When he sets his mind to something, he does it,” explained fellow firefighter Kevin Morris. “He can talk his way through anything.” And good communication skills is a must have for a successful fireman, said Morris, a nine-year firefighter.

Morris wasn’t the only person to recognize Kitchen’s “go get ‘em” attitude. Staff Sgt. Bruce Gentry, who recruited Kitchen into the Marine Corps in

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Many Of Marine Corps' Best And Brightest Stand Guard At Embassies, Consulates

By DAVID JOSAR,
STUTTGART BUREAU

FRANKFURT, Germany — Protecting American embassies and consulates across the globe, members of the Marine Security Guard are ambassadors in blue who are considered some of the brightest and best the Corps has to offer.

"Essentially, we are the cream of the crop," said Marine Sgt. Justin Stokes, 25, assigned to Company H in Frankfurt, where he helps protect the consulate. "You represent your country, your military and are the first impression many people get of young Americans."

About 1,200 men and women are assigned throughout the world to the Marine Security Guard. Those numbers will grow in the next few years as the United States opens more embassies and consulates.

Company H Commander Lt. Col. Jack E. Ray said there are currently 126 guard detachments. By June, there will be 132. By 2005, 159 detachments are expected. Some of that expansion is because the United States is opening embassies in countries that once were part of the Soviet Union.

"We're really growing," said Ray, whose Company H covers most of central Europe. He has 14 detachments under his command and expects to soon get a 15th in Bratislava.

A Marine Security Guard unit ranges from as few as six members to more than 30 members at a large post like the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt.

Guards — most of whom are noncommissioned officers — provide security for the diplomatic posts and assist the protection force for visiting dignitaries.

Another not so expected role is to provide a social outlet for Americans stationed in the communities served by the guards.

In Frankfurt, the finishing touches are being put on the Marine House, a spacious quarters where the 11 Marines stationed there live.

There is a large weight room in the basement and a pool table adjacent the ballroom. A bar is to be installed soon.

Marines share large two- and three-bedroom apartments where each person has their own bathroom.

They regularly host community parties and use the proceeds to fund the annual Marine Ball, Ray said.

"They become a focal point for the community," he said. "The Marine House becomes a meeting point."

In more isolated postings, Stokes and Ray said, the city surrounding a posting may simply be too dangerous for socializing, and the Marine House provides the only outlet for relaxation.

52 years of service

The first class of 83 Marine Security Guards graduated in January 1949, after the State Department requested a reliable, well-trained force to protect its diplomatic posts. Those Marines were sent to Bangkok, Thailand; Tangier, Morocco; Cairo, Egypt; and Seoul, South Korea.

The program has remained competitive, and those who join get extra points toward their next promotion. Marines with a rank of sergeant or below go through a six-week course of instruction where they are taught security measures like how to spot possible threats and how to use their police batons.

Senior noncommissioned officers go through a more intensive eight-week course. Both classes are held at the Marine Security Guard School at Quantico, Va.

Ray said roughly 30 percent of the candidates drop out of the training.

"You want Marines who are very mature, can work on their own," Ray said. "They have to be responsible. They have to be able to handle almost any situation that can come their way."

Marines with a rank of sergeant and below serve a tour of duty of 30 months with two 15-month postings; NCOs serve two 18-month tours. Lower-ranking personnel who are married are not eligible to serve as guards. The reason, Ray said, is that in many of the postings there are not enough facilities to support families.

The Marine Security Guard's primary responsibility is providing protection to the embassies and consulates.

In Frankfurt, for example, they stand watch behind bullet-proof glass in the front lobby. They watch video monitors and are responsible for pushing the final buzzer that unlocks the inside door to the embassy.

Outside, a German police vehicle stands watch and inside the front doors, contracted security guards search bags, check identification badges and pass visitors through metal detectors.

"We're the last line," said Marine Sgt. Edward Thorne, who was at post inside the consulate during a shift last week.

Stokes said the Frankfurt posting is comfy compared to others.

Before being assigned to Germany, he was at an embassy in West Africa. Around Christmas, a building that housed Americans was hit by gunfire during an uprising.

Stokes and other Marine

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1992, also recognized the former-Male High School student's drive to excel.

"I talked to him for five minutes and tried to scare him about the Marine Corps to see if he really wanted to be a Marine," said Gentry, who is now Kitchen's noncommissioned officer-in-charge. "He called me back a couple of days later wanting to know when he could join."

Kitchen recalled one specific time when his Marine Corps training assisted him with his work during a fire run.

Inside a burning, smoke-filled home, Kitchen and several other firefighters were caught without their masks on and were not able to breathe. That's when his gas chamber training from boot camp kicked in, he said.

"I was able to control myself, get my bearings and continue with my mission," said Kitchen. "We [Marines] don't need a different mind frame to handle a job like this. We've al-

ways had a different mind frame anyways. We have that [Marine Corps] training."

But while firefighting has added to his life, Kitchen said it hasn't changed his life, or his outlook on it.

"It's added a little bit more adventure, a little more excitement," he said. "They [firefighters] are the closest thing to a family you'll find, just like the Marine Corps. The sacrifices these guys make out here are unreal."

Adventure. Excitement. Sacrifice. All part of the job for Kitchen, who said he's always been attracted to positions where he could help other people. Now as an Emergency Medical Technician-qualified firefighter, he's able to help those in need even more.

Hopefully, his skills will be needed on the Jefferson County Police Department in Louisville, where he's currently seeking employment, said Kitchen.

"You've got to have the drive, the will to do this," said Morris, who has always been impressed with Kitchen's drive to succeed. "Otherwise, you could get someone killed. He [Kitchen] is driven."

Everyone should have goals, but achieving them, according to Kitchen, all depends on the individual. The Marine Corps has helped Kitchen reach his goals.

"The Marine Corps has helped me grow up," he said.

According to author Zig Ziglar, "desire is the the great equalizer." For Kitchen, this couldn't hold more true.

"You have to know what you want to do in life, and go for it," he said. "No matter how many doors get slammed in your face, no matter how many brick walls you run into, focus on your goals, and you'll achieve them."

Security Guard (cont'd from Page 2)

guards put on battle dress uniforms and were ready to protect the building against attack. However, nothing happened.

Marine Guards protect their post 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

They regularly practice "reaction drills" in case of fire, intruders or angry mobs. However, they are not intended to be a fighting force capable of holding out against a hostile population or army. They are generally only supplied with light weapons: shotguns, 9 mm pistols, revolvers, tear gas canisters and smoke grenades.

Hazards are part of the job, especially in more remote, undeveloped parts of the world.

In December, a Marine assigned to protect the American embassy in Niger was shot in the arm during a robbery in the community. A civilian employee was killed in the attack.

In June 1985, leftist guerrillas in San Salvador, El Salvador, killed four Marines with automatic weapons fire as they sat outside a café in a popular tourist area.

Marines have also fallen under attack in Liberia,

Somalia, Rwanda and the Congo.

"There is an element of danger to the job," Stokes said. "But that often has more to do with the community than the job."

For most of the Marine guards, the less media attention they get, the better. Because getting noticed usually means that something bad has happened.

In August 1998, the spotlight turned to two U.S. embassies in Africa and their Marine guards.

Sgt. Jesse Aliganga was killed in Nairobi, Kenya, when terrorists blew up the U.S. embassy there. Another attack happened in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. Eleven Americans died in the attacks.

Story reprinted courtesy of European Stars and Stripes. (April 15, 2001)

Look in the mirror: Are you ready for duty?

BY SGTMAJ. WILLIE F. METOYER,
SGT MAJ. SUPPORT BN, MCRD SAN DIEGO

MCRD SAN DIEGO, Calif. — “What makes Marines special? Asking that question misses the most fundamental point about being a Marine. In our Corps, everyone — mechanic, cannoneer, supplyman, clerk, aviator, cook—is a rifleman first. The entire Corps, approximately 173,000 active duty strong, and more than 213,000 of our reserve force, are all infantry Marines.

All Marines speak the language of the rifle and bayonet, of muddy boots and long, hot marches. It is never us versus them, only us. That is the secret of the Corps.

Some Marines understand this secret more than others when wearing our uniform. Read the following example of duty to your country, our country.

A gunnery sergeant was sitting at his desk just down the hall from the commanding officer’s office. As the gunny finished his second cup of coffee, the CO stepped into his office.

“Gunny,” the Captain said, “I hate to ask you this, but you need to be in a CAX (Combined Armed Exercise) in six days from now for a six week op(operation). Can you go?”

With no emotion in his voice or without even looking up, the gunny replied, “I put on my uniform this morning, didn’t I?”

The CO was a little taken back by the gunny’s response because he wasn’t one to talk in riddles. The CO thought to himself, “Has this veteran of 15 years finally gone off the deep end on me?”

The wise old protector of the enlisted Corps smiled and began to explain. “Sir, I made a promise to myself more than 15 years ago that I would only put this uniform on as long as I’m available and ready to do the duty it requires of me.”

While this story may be obvious to many Marines, it seems to completely escape others. Available for duty means more than negotiating premium assignments, scheming to get a hotel suite versus a regular base billeting room, or how much time off you can muster out of those tours.

Available for duty really means we are ready to go any place in the world, at any time.

Recently, I’ve seen some Marines spending more time and energy getting out of an assignment or duty than it would have taken to accomplish the mission at hand.

Thinking back on Marines that have come before, I talked about the Marines who were at Belleau Wood and Iwo Jima. I’m glad they weren’t worried about assignments, hotel suites, and time off.

Many of those warriors sacrificed a great deal; some gave the ultimate sacrifice to obtain and ensure the freedoms we often take for granted today.

Their approach may have seemed overly simplistic; however, when it comes to defining service to our country, the answer is just that simple. Those Marines were available for duty and they did their jobs well.

In today’s world of what can you do for me, it’s easy to lose sight of what service before self

is all about. Service goes far beyond the individual, it affects the well being of our nation.

Sitting here at Marine Corps Depot in San Diego, enjoying our great American way of life, it’s easy to forget the sacrifices we have agreed to endure in the service of our country. When deployed to the desert, on a float, Kosovo or Bosnia, the sacrifices become much clearer. If a single Marine doesn’t pull his or her weight, another Marine is forced to fill the slot causing a ripple effect felt not only at our base, but throughout our Marine Corps.

These vacant billets or missions must be filled by people available and ready for duty. Everyone’s family would like them to be home for the holidays, birthday parties and anniversaries. I have missed my fair share. I can’t think of anyone who would intentionally miss those things.

Military members are asked to sacrifice continuously. We must remember we are serving our country as volunteers - not forced to do it.

I believe each of us as true professionals need to take a good look in the mirror and ask “am I available for duty?” Everyone must decide for himself or herself, just as the gunnery sergeant did.

I, too, put on my uniform today and I am available for duty.

How about you?





A Message from the President *About Armed Forces Day 2001*

I am proud to offer my sincere thanks during Armed Forces Week to the brave men and women who protect our Nation.

During the past several months, I have been privileged to witness personally the depth of your dedication and the strength of your character. The professional manner in which you conduct your duties, your can-do spirit, and your sense of patriotism all reflect the fact that our Armed Forces are second to none in the world.

In a world of both existing and emerging threats, you provide a strong and steady defense. Because of you, America is a secure nation where our citizens can hope, dream, and live their lives in freedom.

My office holds no greater honor than to serve as your Commander in Chief. On behalf of all Americans this Armed Forces Week, I salute you for the tremendous contributions you make to our Nation's defense. You are guardians of peace and liberty and have the thanks of a grateful Nation.

May God bless you all.

George W. Bush

4th District sergeants major revisit MCRD, basic training

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. AMY BRACKMAN
4TH MCD, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PARRIS ISLAND, S.C. - Enlisting an individual into the Marine Corps isn't the last step in the recruiting process. Recruiters are also responsible for preparing their poolees for recruit training. The sergeants major for 4th Marine Corps District recognize this and during their semi-annual Sergeant Major Conference at MCRD Parris Island, S.C. in

March they visited different stages of recruit training.

During their trip to the depot they visited recruits, spoke with Marines to get a better idea of the relationship between recruiting and recruit training. They also toured Special Training Company where recruits go for physical rehabilitation or weight control. Later they observed an Initial Strength Test, and a Saturday morning 'pick-up'.

"The whole focus was to see what we can do to help the recruiter folks," explained Sergeant Major Willie Love, Sergeant Major, 4th Marine Corps District.

This was the first visit to a depot in many years for some of the sergeants major. Sgt. Maj. Love hadn't visited depot training sites in five years. He saw some differences from his last visit, "I was enlightened, seeing what's going on down there," said Love. "The drill instructors are now talking with the recruits and mentoring them," he added, "that's a good idea."

Sgt. Maj. David Bullock of Recruiting Station Harrisburg has worked at a depot before and believes visiting either depot periodically is important for senior Marines. "Enlightening senior leadership of the Corps is very important," he said. "Recruit training is an ever changing process and it's important to see this continually changing evolution."

The sergeants major ate lunch with recruits from their respective areas and got an idea of how their recruiters could have better prepared them for recruit training.

After speaking to Marines and recruits Sgt. Maj. Love believes recruiters need to



PHOTO BY SGT. AMY BRACKMAN

Sergeant Major Leon Jordan, RS Louisville tested some equipment at Special Training Company during his visit to Parris Island.

prepare their poolees more for the physical rigors of training. “DIs can teach drill and rank structures,” explained Love. “Poolees need to be prepared for (all) the physical training not just for the IST.”

Other sergeants major also stressed physical preparation of poolees. “To see as a whole how demotivating the environment (STC) can be was one of the most important things,” commented Sgt. Maj. Bullock. He believes recruiters need to work with their poolees more to prevent them from going to STC.

The recruiters of 4th Marine Corps District may see some changes heading their way, from this visit. The Corps is continually seeking improvement and the sergeants major of the district will be implementing a few changes. They will make sure that once a recruiter enlists an individual into the pool, interaction between Marine and poolee doesn’t stop.



Top: Sergeant Major Willie Love, 4th Marine Corps District Headquarters, listens to some concerns of recruits in hopes of helping recruiters better understand how to prepare their poolees for the challenge of bootcamp. Above: Sergeant Major Alvin Athey Jr., RS Baltimore and a recruit talk about the challenges that she has overcome during her training.

Welcome Aboard

1stLt. J. Richardson, RS Balt
MGySgt. M. Holman, Hqtrs
MSgt. W. Carter, Hqtrs
MSgt. D.D. Simmons,
MSgt. T. Winters, RS Hbrg
GySgt. G.E. Bearden, RS Balt
GySgt. D. Clinger, RS Lvll
GySgt. T.L. Johnson, RS Rich
GySgt. D.R. Kreakie, RS Lvll
GySgt. C.T. Storie, RS Balt
GySgt. H.C. Tanner, RS Balt
SSgt. D.H. Allen, RS Chas
SSgt. J.E. Buckworth, RS Hbrg
SSgt. G.J. Clear, RS Clev
SSgt. R.J. Cook, RS Lvll
SSgt. G. Coon, RS Troy
SSgt. S. Dennison, RS Clev
SSgt. J.Y. Gross, RS Fred
SSgt. M.S. Hall, RS Clev
SSgt. W.B. Huff, RS Troy
SSgt. C.A. Newton, RS Balt
SSgt. T.E. Oberst, RS Clev
SSgt. S. Potwin, RS Balt
SSgt. M. Rittgarn, RS Fred
SSgt. D. Rosol II, RS Lvll
SSgt. G.H. Schelling, RS Rich
SSgt. E. Scott, RS Fred
SSgt. R.N. Secoy, RS Fred
SSgt. M. Stoddard, RS Troy
SSgt. K.A. Towe, RS Rich
Sgt. K. Ahmad, RS Clev
Sgt. D. Carrico, RS Troy
Sgt. J.A. Clark, RS Clev
Sgt. L. Cohen Jr., RS Rich
Sgt. K.Z. Davis, RS Balt
Sgt. S.D. Deeds, RS Lvll
Sgt. W.F. Eberlin, RS Fred
Sgt. M.L. Faulcon, RS Rich
Sgt. V.G. Gross, RS Balt
Sgt. A. Hayes, RS Troy
Sgt. S.N. Khamthong, RS Rich
Sgt. C.F. McDew, RS Lvll
Sgt. R.M. Mimms, RS Clev
Sgt. F.G. Mingus, RS Troy
Sgt. J.J. Nungesser, RS Fred
Sgt. J.I. Plata, RS Rich
Sgt. D.J. Smith, RS Rich
Sgt. J.K. Spencer, RS Lvll
Sgt. J. Stauffer, RS Hbrg
Sgt. J. Tiller, RS Lvll
Sgt. C.K. Van Horn, RS Balt
Sgt. J. Watts Jr., RS Clev
Sgt. D.E. Williams, RS Troy
Sgt. F. Williams, RS Hbrg
Cpl. E. Estes, RS Balt
Cpl. W.R. Favinger, RS Hbrg
Cpl. C.W. George, Hqtrs
Cpl. P.V. Nguyen, Hqtrs
Cpl. R. O'Hare, Hqtrs

Personal Awards for March & April

Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal

Capt. J.A. Harrison, RS Balt
SSgt. G.E. Turner, RS Clev

Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal

GySgt. J.J. Corvin, RS Clev
GySgt. R.F. Holland, RS Troy
SSgt. S.C. Coletta, RS Clev
SSgt. C.A. Dubose, RS Hbrg
SSgt. J.P. Middleton, RS Balt
Sgt. T.M. King, RS Chas
Sgt. C.J. Ruehrwein, Hqtrs

Commanding Officer Certificate of Commendation

RSS Woodbridge, RS Fred
GS-11 A.F. Bland, DFAS
SSgt. J.F. Allen Jr., RS Clev
SSgt. C.K. Chambers, RS Clev
SSgt. J.C. Gary, RS Troy
SSgt. A.W. Junkins, RS Troy
SSgt. D.M. Leikwold, RS Hbrg
SSgt. T.G. Lidge, RS Clev
SSgt. T.L. McAllister, Parris Island
SSgt. R.M. Noel, Parris Island
GS-07 S.L. Muller, DFAS
Sgt. D.A. Dunk, Hqtrs
Sgt. B.K. Pedric, RS Clev
Sgt. S.J. Powell, RS Troy
Cpl. J.A. Greissmann, Hqtrs
PFC S.J. Greeson, Quantico

Promotions

Maj. M.M. Pitts, Hqtrs
MGySgt. M. Holman, Hqtrs
MSgt. G. Bailey, RS Balt
MSgt. T. Lucear, RS Balt
GySgt. R.G. Cooke Jr., RS Clev
GySgt. J. Dallas Jr., RS Troy
GySgt. R. McGee, RS Lvll
GySgt. J. Mitchell, RS Lvll
SSgt. C. Cunningham, RS Balt
SSgt. K. Cyphers, RS Chas
SSgt. T. Faison, RS Rich
SSgt. V. Jenkins, RS Rich
SSgt. J. Larson III, RS Chas
SSgt. S. Potwin, RS Balt
SSgt. I. Rodriguez, RS Hbrg
SSgt. R. Secoy, RS Fred
SSgt. K. Towe, RS Rich
SSgt. D. Uncapher, RS Lvll
SSgt. C. Williams, RS Fred
Sgt. C. Kitchen, RS Lvll
Sgt. J.J. Watts Jr., RS Clev

Recruiter Awards

for March

Recruiter
of the Quarter
Sgt. Laboy
RS Harrisburg

Recruiter
of the Month
SSgt. Peters
RS Frederick

RS of the Month
RS Harrisburg

2-Man RSS
of the month
SSgt. Terry
RS Troy

3-Man RSS
of the month
SSgt. Daniels
RS Harrisburg

4-Man RSS
of the month
GySgt. Otey
RS Charleston

5-Man RSS
of the month
GySgt. Scheib
RS Harrisburg

6-Man RSS
of the month
MSgt. McNatt
RS Charleston

4MCD Rankings FYTD

RS Cleveland
RS Baltimore
RS Richmond
RS Frederick
RS Harrisburg
RS Troy
RS Louisville
RS Charleston

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